works, public participation and awareness programmes etc. Since, GAP Phase-I did not cover the pollution load of the river fully, GAP Phase-II was approved in stages from 1993 onwards, including action plans for the tributaries namely, Yamuna, Gomti, Damodar and Mahananda. GAP Phase II was merged in 1996 with the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP), which presently covers identified polluted stretches of 36 rivers in 165 towns spread over 20 States. During the last two years, 119 schemes have been completed with creation of sewage treatment capacity of 98.36 mld at a cost of Rs. 113.06 crores.

Prevention and control of forest fires

1042. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:
SHRI DARA SINGH:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a moderate Forest Survey of India (FSI) estimate says that timber worth Rs. 35 crore is lost in fires in 63 million hectares of Indian forest everyday, apart from unaccounted damage to biodiversity;

(b) whether a Satellite-linked Fire Alert System developed by NASA is turning out to be an effective tool in saving wild-life and bio-diversity from forest fires apart from saving time; and

(c) if so, how this system builds database of fire locations which can be used to identify fire sensitive zones scientifically as well as plan fire control strategy in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) Forest Survey of India (FSI) has not done any studies to assess damage in monetary terms to the forests due to fire.

(b) The Satellite-linked Fire Alert System is expected to control forest fire promptly but mechanism to analyses it's effectiveness in saving wildlife and biodiversity is not yet developed by Forest Survey of India.

(c) The geo — coordinates (latitude/longitude) of fire locations in forests (obtained through satellite) of various years shall form the data base. Forest Survey of India has already got this data of the last 4 years which can be used to identify fire sensitive zones which would help in formulating fire control strategy in India.

Non-arrival of migratory birds in Goa

1043. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether migratory birds reaching Goan lakes from eastern Europe and the Himalayas have failed to swoop over some of the lakes in Goa, this winter;

(b) if so, whether any reasons for the same have been identified;

(c) the names of the lakes in Goa where these birds have been swooping all these years; and

(d) the details as regards the friendly environmental climate created, if any, to ensure the flow of these birds into Goa and other parts of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) No, Sir. On the contrary, as reported by the State Government, the number of species of migratory birds coming to Goa in winter has increased from 37 species last year to 50 species during the current year.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The important water bodies which are visited by the migratory birds are Chorao lake, Carambolim lake, Bhatim lake, Pilar lake, Curtorim lake, Verna lake, etc.

(d) The important steps taken for the better conservation of migratory birds are as given below:—

(i) Important migratory species of birds have been included in the Schedules of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 thereby providing them legal protection.

(ii) Important wetlands/wintering habitats of migratory birds, like Keoloadeo, Chilka, etc., have been declared as Protected Areas.

(iii) Financial and technical assistance are provided to the State Governments under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes for conservation of habitats of Migratory birds.

(iv) India is a signatory to the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) and to the Ramsar Convention and is obliged to protect the migratory species and their habitats, including wetlands.

(v) India has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with CMS for protection of Siberian Cranes and its habitat.

(vi) Regular patrolling of the important bird habitats is carried out by the concerned State Forest Departments to check poaching, etc.

(vii) Programmes for awareness for protection of wildlife including birds are conducted, regularly.

Use of water in wetlands

1044. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that an estimated 38 per cent of fresh water wetlands, which are our national assets, have been lost during current decade in the country;

(b) whether Government is also aware that many wetlands are being used for dumping of waste which also causes serious environmental threat;

(c) if so, the details of the action proposed by Government to protect country's wetlands and prohibit the conversion of wetlands to other use; and